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Ms Louise Dunn
North Yorkshire County Council
Northallerton

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North Yorkshire Feedback Youth Crime Prevention Inspection

Dear Louise

First of all, on behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you and your colleagues for your hospitality and professional courtesy during our stay in North Yorkshire last week. This made our task much easier. We were very impressed with the enthusiasm shown by all staff who clearly displayed a child centred approach to their work.

As promised, we are providing some informal feedback to you, this will not specifically form part of the report and is provided solely for you and your selected colleagues to have some understanding of how `fresh eyes` have seen North Yorkshire's approaches. A word of caution however, as we have not completed our fieldwork we cannot fully benchmark your approaches, consequently, at the conclusion of the fieldwork we may feel that North Yorkshire is more advanced (or opposite) than we initially considered. Please also bear in mind that as this was a short visit, some findings could not be fully corroborated. This is always an issue with Inspections such as this one, but this is particularly the case in North Yorkshire due to its large geographical size.

The Inspection team would have very much liked to visit several other sites in the county in order to obtain a more rounded view of provision, but due to time and practical issues this was not really an option. We can therefore only offer our views on a restricted, albeit very interesting programme.

The following comments are therefore our initial observations following our visit. The comments should not be seen as definitive findings and we reserve the right to amend or modify them in the light of further fieldwork in other areas.

We have decided to present the feedback into criteria and offer headline strengths and areas for improvement

Evidence Based Practice

The area works to the principles of effective practice

Strengths

- A number of prevention cases were examined; there appeared to a good range of interventions available to customise to an individual either directly through Youth Offending services or other agencies. It was clear that Targeted Youth Support (TYS) workers understood the principles of effective practice.
- There was clear use of tested approaches such as parenting programmes.
- The TYS threshold is effectively managed through accepted risk factor criteria, for example, the vulnerability check list.
- North Yorkshire`s move to TYS as opposed to the more traditional approach to the prevention strategy appears to be showing promise and has been positively commented upon by many practitioners and managers.

Leadership

There is effective local leadership in youth crime prevention

Strengths

- The prevention of offending is a strategic priority in North Yorkshire and a number of initiatives appear to evidence this. There are strong partnership approaches at all levels and there is clear direction of `Prevention strategy` from both CDRP and the Children`s Board.
- The inspection team was particularly impressed with the structure of the integrated youth support and TYS provision within the six hubs in the county. There appeared to be a good understanding by several agencies and practitioners of this structure. It is recognised that this approach required significant leadership from agencies and individuals which does demonstrate good partnership working
- A common purpose ethos was detected at a senior level.

Area for Improvement

- The Probation service do not appear to be involved in the Prevention strategy.
- There is an absence of health representatives at the substance misuse management board.

Identification and Assessment

There are clear systems for the identification and initial assessment of children likely to enter the criminal justice system

Strengths

- There is an on going training programme to train front line practitioners in the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). This has resulted in an increase of submissions compared to the previous year and is likely to continue to rise as more practitioners become trained and comfortable with its use and the reporting structure. Until mid 2008, Targeted Youth provision was available only to those children in identified YISP and YIP areas. As North Yorkshire is geographically huge this resulted in only a relatively few children being eligible for any intervention activity. The new system in effect has made ALL children in the county eligible. This together with the increase in CAF training has resulted in the catchment pool greatly increasing.
- Police Safer School and Youth Action officers appeared to have an excellent understanding of the referral systems.
- Overall, ONSET and CAF assessments and reviews were completed promptly and to a good quality. Risk and protective factors were clearly identified and commented upon.
- Inspectors had the opportunity to speak to a number of children and their parents who had received services under the TYS. The feedback was *extremely* positive. It was clear that there was good engagement with children and parents.
- There are a variety of referral routes including a well used `self referral` from parents.

Areas for Improvement

- Although there is a clear process for the use of the CAF, The `sign up` for all agencies still appears to be a little disjointed.
- North Yorkshire are, in places still using both ONSET and CAF assessments, which appears to be due to reporting and funding conditions imposed by the Youth Justice Board. It remains unclear how these two assessment processes complement each other and furthermore, it is believed that some practitioners may benefit from some clarification as to when to use CAF and when to use ONSET (or both).
- Police officers may need further guidance as to whether it is appropriate for them to be designated a `Lead Professional` in CAF cases. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance indicates that police officers should not, in general complete CAFs. However, this is a matter for local police

management in consultation with partners. In some parts of the county police officers certainly do complete CAFs but have received inconsistent messages relating to the next stage of `Lead Professional`. It is understandable that the police may wish not to take on this role, but the argument as to why they should not, could be offered by other professionals, such as teachers and health workers.

- There is an absence of frontline health provision at the hubs and some schools.

Delivery

Interventions are delivered to reduce the likelihood of children offending

Strengths

- There is a wide range of interventions and high levels of contact with children and families. The type of intervention offered generally was commensurate to what was hoped to be achieved and not simply `off the shelf`. There were reported excellent links with all agencies involved in youth crime prevention.
- Practitioners in all agencies demonstrated a child centred approach.
- There were good Neighbourhood Policing links with the Youth Justice Service, schools, and youth provision.
- Risky Behaviour Advisors provide tier two health information at some schools, albeit there was an absence of paperwork to audit concerns identified and demonstrate ownership and accountability of issues.
- All young people referred to tier three substance misuse services are offered a general health check – a 52% take up rate.
- Police-led interventions such as *Consequences* in Harrogate and *Copalot* in Scarborough appear to be well embedded and offer appropriate early intervention advice and activities.
- North Yorkshire operate a `School inclusion quality mark`, part of which will embrace work within school for 8-13 years old which may address emerging risk factors, such as school attendance, disruptive behaviour and school `belonging`. This, it is said greatly reduces the numbers of children being referred to the next level.
- Staff were able to recognise safeguarding issues and refer appropriately.

Areas for Improvement

- There is little, if any health input into the training of prevention workers.
- There is no health professional to review cases that are NOT referred to health specialisms, that is to say that it may be helpful to do so to ensure that health

needs have been considered and/or where they have been identified and assessed appropriate interventions are actioned.

- There may be some difficulties being experienced making referrals from prevention and substance misuse into CAMHS without the involvement of a statutory partner, or referral from a GP.
- Some action plans examined, arising out of assessment required more detail.
- In one case study, a child, after completion of a CAF was referred to TYS for exhibiting inappropriate sexualised behaviour. This case was declined by TYS and it appears that no intervention was put in place. It remains a little unclear as to whether this non-acceptance for TYS intervention was because TYS did not recognise this behaviour as a possible pre-cursor to sexual offending or whether there was not an appropriate intervention available to meet the needs of that child. TYS may wish to review the awareness and provision in this area.

Impact

Interventions to reduce the likelihood of offending amongst children have had a positive impact

Strengths

- Key workers were able to relate to individual successes as a result of interventions. This was seen in several case files examined.
- The inspectors were pleased to personally meet several children and their parents and were impressed with their perceptions of interventions and progress made.
- There was an understanding that interim outcome measures could contribute to the reduction of offending/re-offending, for example an improvement in school attendance and attainment, improvement in parenting etc.

Area for Improvement

- Assessments may improve further by ensuring that progress evidence is more easily recorded or at least more visible, so that changes to risk and protective factors could be more easily identified and commented upon.
- It was unclear how North Yorkshire will present forthcoming First Time Entrant (FTE) data in light of the introduction of the Youth Restorative Disposal approach, which will, and is, effectively removing *some* young offenders from the reprimand and the final warning process, and therefore the FTE indicator.
- The impact of interventions has not been fully assessed. As a consequence, it is unclear what prevention activities are the most effective in North Yorkshire. How these activities are assessed will require thought but will determine their value and relative importance.

I hope this will be of assistance to you. May I thank you, your colleagues and partners once again for your assistance in this inspection.

Yours Sincerely

Gary Boughen
Superintendent HMIC